



**US Army Corps
of Engineers**
St. Paul District

Information Paper

Reservoir Operating Plan Evaluation (ROPE), Mississippi Headwaters



View of Pine River Dam

Contact

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Location/Description

The Mississippi River Headwaters reservoirs consist of six primary reservoirs located in central northern Minnesota.

The reservoirs were created by a series of dams and control structures, initially designed to augment the Mississippi River flows for navigation. The dams creating the six reservoirs were built between 1884 and 1912. Since then, the Corps of Engineers has developed campsites around each of the dam sites.

Status

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the U.S. Forest Service are conducting a jointly sponsored, long-range reservoir operating plan evaluation study for the Mississippi River Headwaters reservoirs. The study began in December 2001 and is expected to be completed in the winter of 2006. The primary purpose of the study is to evaluate alternative plans for each of the existing reservoirs and try to improve systemwide operations of the Mississippi Headwaters reservoirs and to improve stewardship of this important resource. An Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) will be generated for this study.

The emphasis of the study is to meet current and future needs for navigation; tribal trust resources; flood

damage reduction; fish and wildlife habitat restoration and preservation; recreation and tourism; water quality and water supply; erosion and sedimentation; hydropower; and sustaining hydrologic function on the lakes and rivers. The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, Ottertail Power, and Minnesota Power are collaborating headwaters dam operators included in this planning effort. The Mississippi Headwaters Board and the Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe also play important roles in the study by helping to coordinate and evaluate alternative plans from the systemwide perspective.

A formal Notice of Intent (NOI) and formal public scoping meeting for the EIS were completed in May 2004. Extensive stakeholder inputs have been gathered from various task forces and citizen volunteer groups, each created to address specific issues or geographic areas. These inputs, along with data from many other sources, will be used in the development of two powerful plan formulation computer models. These models will be used to fully evaluate and communication alternative plans to the public and stakeholders. These models are scheduled to be functional in the summer of 2005. This shared vision planning process is intended to foster public involvement, consensus building, and public education.

A draft report and EIS are scheduled to be completed and distributed for formal review in the spring of 2006.

Authority

This study is funded through Corps and Forest Service operations funding as part of normal operations and maintenance actions required for stewardship. A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) and a separate Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) have established the cost shared partnering for this study and EIS.

Fiscal

In fiscal year 2002 the study was initiated by the Corps and the Forest Service entered into a partnership for the study in May 2003. A total of \$880k are needed in FY05 and an additional \$485k in FY06 is needed to complete this study.

ROPE Study / feasibility level study	\$4 million
General Design and/or Construction	Unknown